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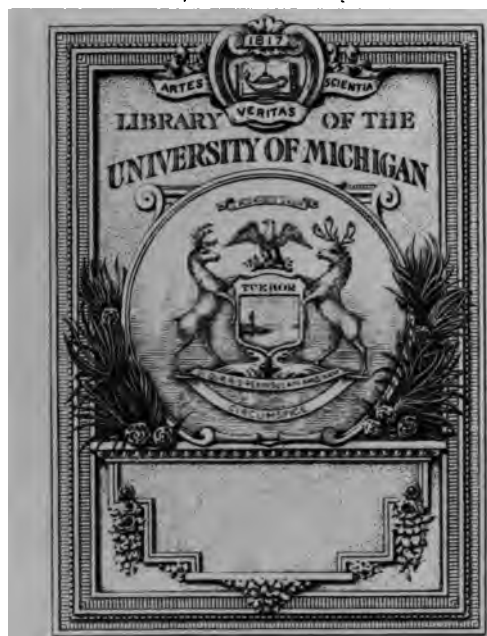
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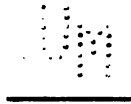


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THE  
REPUBLIC OF PLATO

BOOK VIII

TRANSLATED BY  
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# THE REPUBLIC

## BOOK VIII

SOCRATES, GLAUCON, AND ADEIMANTUS

I. "Very well," I continued, "it is then a matter upon which we have agreed, my dear Glaucon, that in a State where the government aims at perfection wives and children must be in common;<sup>1</sup> and that all education, and in like manner the pursuits of war and peace are to be common, and those of the citizens are to be Kings who have proved themselves best as philosophers and warriors."

"We have agreed to that," said Glaucon.

"And none the less we granted<sup>2</sup> that the rulers, after their appointment, are to take the soldiers and settle them in dwellings such<sup>3</sup> as we have already described, which shall be common to all, and where no one shall have anything private; and, further, if you remember, we came to an agreement not merely about the houses of these warriors, but also about the kind of property they were to possess."

"Indeed I do remember that we certainly thought none of them ought to have any proprietary rights

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<sup>1</sup> Compare Book V.

<sup>2</sup> In Book III, 415 D ff.

<sup>3</sup> See Book III, 416 D ff.

such as at present belong to the rest of mankind; but that, as athletes trained for war and guardians of the State, they were to receive from the other citizens, by way of annual compensation for this protection, only their maintenance, while they were keeping watch and ward over their own safety and the security of the whole Commonwealth."

"True," I said; "but since we concluded that subject,<sup>4</sup> let us recall the point at which we digressed to come here, that we may resume our former pathway."

"That will be an easy matter," he replied. "For you were talking well-nigh as you are doing at present, implying that you had completed the discussion of the State and saying that you accounted as good such a Commonwealth as you had then described, and the man who answered to this model, and that too, though, as it seems, you had it in your power to tell us of a still more perfect  
544 State and man.<sup>5</sup> Moreover you maintained that if your State was the right one, all the others must be defective. And as far as I remember, you said that of the remaining constitutions there were four varieties which it was worth while for us to consider, examining their defects, and the defects of the individuals corresponding to them, in order that, after having observed all these individuals, and having agreed as to which was the best, and which the worst man, we might determine whether, or not,

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<sup>4</sup> The reference is to Books II-IV.

<sup>5</sup> As they are set forth in Books V-VII.

the *first* was the happiest, and the *second* most miserable. But at the moment when I asked you to tell me what four forms of government you had in mind,<sup>6</sup> Adeimantus and Polemarchus interrupted us (introducing a new subject), and in consequence you took up the discussion which you have just finished."

"Your recollection is perfect."

"Then, like a wrestler, let me have again the same hold, and, when I repeat the same question, strive to give me the very answer you intended to give at that time."

"Yes, if I can only do so," I replied.

"And verily," he said, "I am desirous also for my own sake to hear what four governments you meant."

"I shall have no trouble in answering your question; for these are the forms of government that I mean, and they have also distinct names. First we have the one most widely praised, your constitution of Crete and Sparta. There is the second in order, which is also the second in repute, the so-called oligarchy, a constitution fraught with many evils. In the third place comes democracy, the antagonist and natural successor of oligarchy; and lastly, the noble tyranny, which differs from all the others, and is the fourth and worst malady of a state. Or what other form of government can you name which has a character conspicuous and distinct from these? For principalities and sovereignties that are bought

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<sup>6</sup> In Book V, 449 A.

and sold, and such governments, form a sort of intermediate class, and are found quite as often among the barbarians as among the Greeks."

"Yes," he replied, "at least we hear of many curious instances."

II. "Are you aware now," I said, "that there must be as many distinctive characters of men as there are special kinds of governments? Or do you suppose states are sprung from oak or rock,<sup>7</sup> and not shaped from the manners of the citizens, which as it were by their momentum draw other things after them?"

"I believe," he said, "that governments derive their form from nothing else than the prevailing traits of the people."

"If then there are five kinds of governments, corresponding to those there will be five kinds of mental formation among individuals."

"Undoubtedly."

"We have already spoken of the man who corresponds to an aristocracy, and him we rightly call  
545 good and just."

"We have."

"Must we then at this point proceed to consider

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<sup>7</sup> See Homer's *Odyssey* XIX, 163, and Plato's *Apology* 34 D, for the proverbial expression.

the inferior characters, first the contentious and ambitious man formed after the pattern of the Spartan Commonwealth, and in like manner the oligarchical, the democratical, and the tyrannical man; in order that, when we have obtained a view of the most unjust man, we may set him over against the most just; and thus may complete our inquiry into the relative uses of pure justice and pure injustice with reference to the happiness and misery of their possessors, to the end that either obeying Thrasymachus we may pursue injustice, or heeding the argument which is now coming into view, we may follow after justice?"

"Certainly," he replied, "we must do what you say."

"And as we began at first <sup>8</sup> with an examination of the moral characteristics in a state before considering them in the individual man, on the ground that such a method promoted greater clearness, shall we not pursue the same course in the present instance, and begin by examining the government of honor, I have no other name in general use to give it; or we must call it, if you will, timocracy or timarchy — and, in comparison with this, shall we proceed to consider the man who resembles it, and then pass on to oligarchy and the oligarchical man; and then again, after fixing our eyes on democracy, shall we examine the democratical man; and finally reach and inspect a city governed by a tyrant, and again taking a look into the tyrant's soul endeavor

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<sup>8</sup> Compare Book II, 368 E.

to prove competent judges of the subject we have proposed?"

"Doubtless," he said, "that would be at least the reasonable method of inspecting and deciding."

III. "Well, then," I proceeded, "let us endeavor to show how *timocracy* can spring from aristocracy. Is it not absolutely true that in a state every change has its source in the governing body, when dissension arises within it, but when a government is at one with itself, however small it may be, it cannot be shaken?"

"That is certainly true."

"How then, Glaucon, will our State suffer a change, and in what way will our warriors and rulers be at odds with one another or among themselves, or shall we, in imitation of Homer,<sup>9</sup> implore the Muses to tell us how faction first began? And shall we make them speak in the grand manner of tragedy, as if their words were spoken in earnest, while they are merely jesting, playing with us as if we were children?"

"How will they reply?"

546 "Somewhat after this fashion: 'It is indeed

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<sup>9</sup> The allusion is to *Iliad* XVI, 112 f.: 'Tell me now, ye Muses that have mansions in Olympus, how first fire fell on the ships of the Achaians.'

—Lang's translation.

difficult for a city thus constituted to be shaken; but since everything that is created is subject to decay, even a constitution like yours will not endure forever, but one day it will be dissolved. And in this way the dissolution will come about: Not only for plants within the ground, but also among living beings upon its surface, there cometh fecundity or sterility of souls and bodies, as often as revolutions for each distinct species join circumferences of circles describing an orbit which is short for the short-lived, and the reverse for the reverse. But clever though the men be whom you have educated to be leaders of the city, none the more will they, by calculation joined with perception, attain to a knowledge of human fecundity and sterility, but the right moment for propagating the species will escape them, and they will give children to the State when they ought not. Now in the case of a divine creation there is a cycle measured by a perfect number; while for the human creature there is a number in which, first, increments of root and square, comprising three intervals and four limits of elements that make similar and dissimilar figures, and increase and diminish, render all things mutually consistent and rational. The base whereof, in the ratio of four to three, in conjunction with the pentad, produces two harmonies when thrice increased, the one a square consisting of 100 multiplied into itself, the other equal to the former in one dimension, but oblong; on the one side consisting of 100 squares of rational diameters of the number five diminished by one each, or if of irrational

diameters, by two; on the other, of one hundred cubes of the number three.<sup>10</sup> Now this number as a whole is geometrical and has power to control better and worse births; and when your guardians, through ignorance of this, unite brides to bridegrooms unseasonably, there will be (from such marriages) no goodly or fortunate children. The best of these the men of the former generation will appoint to be their successors. Nevertheless, unworthy as they are, when they in turn enter into their fathers' power, they will in the first place begin to neglect us, when they are guardians, unduly disparaging, first of all, music, and then gymnastic; and hence your young men will come to be forgetful of the Muses. Now in consequence of all this the rulers will not prove very eager for the task of assaying the metal of your different races, which are the same as Hesiod's,<sup>11</sup> the golden, the silver, 547 the brass, and the iron. And when silver has been alloyed with iron, and gold with brass, inequality will result, and discordant irregularity; and, if this condition prevails, wherever it is found, it always generates hatred and war. Such, we must say, is the origin of sedition, wherever from time to time it arises.' " <sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The celebrated mathematical puzzle of this passage, referred to by Cicero as a proverb of obscurity, is considered the great difficulty of Book VIII. The explanations offered by the translators do not seem very convincing.

<sup>11</sup> *Works and Days*, 109 ff.

<sup>12</sup> This answer of the Muses begins at 546 A.

"And rightly," he replied, "we shall say that the Muses are answering us."

"Doubtless," I said, "of necessity they will thus speak, since they are Muses."

"What now," he asked, "do they tell us next?"

"That after discord had shown itself," said I, "the two races, each after their kind, pulled in contrary directions, the iron and the brass towards money-making and the acquisition of land and houses and of gold and silver coin; whereas, the other two, the gold and silver races, inasmuch as they were not poor, but endowed with the riches of the soul, inclined toward virtue and the ancient condition of the human race. When they resorted to force and violence against one another, at last they reached an agreement to distribute among themselves and appropriate first the land and houses, and next those who were formerly guarded by them as freemen, friends and as wards supplying maintenance; and then subduing their neighbors and holding them as menials, they occupied themselves with war and with keeping watch and ward over their subjects."

"This radical change," he said, "is, I think, the natural outcome of the causes you have named."

"Well, then," I proceeded, "will not the state where such an order of things prevails, occupy an intermediate place between aristocracy and oligarchy?"

"It certainly will."

IV. "Thus then will the change be accomplished; but after the transformation how will it (the timocratic State) be administered? Is it not manifest that in some particulars it will resemble our former (the perfect) State, and in other respects the oligarchy, seeing that it ranks midway between the two, and will also possess a distinct characteristic of its own?"

"Doubtless," he said.

"Therefore in conferring honor upon the rulers, and in the abstinence of its warrior class from agricultural pursuits, from handicrafts, and from other forms of money-making, in the practice of common meals, and in its care for gymnastic and military exercises, in all such things will it not resemble our former ideal State?"

"Yes, it will."

"Again, shall we say that, in its dread of philosophers, and by its refusal to induct them into office, since it no longer has men of this class who are single-minded and earnest, but a medley of inconsistencies; and consequently falls back on the passionate and simpler natures, upon men naturally  
548 more inclined to war than peace; and, by honoring military plots and stratagems, by engaging in continual army operations, the timocratic state will possess most of such things as distinct traits of its own?"

"Yes."

"Furthermore," said I, "the men of this class, the soldiery, will be avaricious, like the inhabitants of the oligarchic states, and, making wealth their

chief end, will have an ungovernable secret passion for gold and silver, seeing that they own store-rooms and private treasure-houses, where they may deposit and conceal their possessions, and again that they have dwellings planted within surrounding walls, serving simply as the secret cages of their owners, in which lavishing their gifts upon women and other favorites they can make their enormous expenditures."

"Nothing can be more true."

"Then too, while they are careful of their wealth, inasmuch as they prize it and do not acquire it openly, they are nevertheless, by reason of their lust, prodigal of money which belongs to others, and secretly enjoy the stolen fruits of pleasures, evading the law, like boys who shun their father, because they have been schooled not by persuasion but by force, owing to neglect of the true Muse, the faithful ally of reason and philosophy,<sup>13</sup> and to honoring gymnastic more than music."

"Undoubtedly," he said, "you are describing a government of mingled good and evil."

"Yes, certainly," I answered, "one where both are united; but here a single trait, the prevalence of ambitious rivalries, that has its source in the ruling passion of the people, is most distinctly seen."

"That cannot be denied," said Glaucon.

"Such then," I said, "would be the origin and general character of the timocratic state, so

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<sup>13</sup> Compare the notable maxim *Philosophy the highest Music*. Phaedo, 61 A.

sketched, as if one, after employing discourse to trace in outline the form of a commonwealth, did not attempt to complete his work with entire accuracy, because the mere sketch was sufficient to show the true portrait of the perfectly just and the perfectly unjust man; but it would be an interminable task, omitting nothing, to portray in detail the several states and all their customs."

"That is rightly spoken."

V. "What now is the man of the timocratic state? How did he arise, and what sort of a person is he?"

"I think," said Adeimantus, "that he is something like our Glaucon here, at least with respect to ambition."<sup>14</sup>

"Perhaps so," I remarked, "in this one particular, but, it seems to me, the following traits do not belong to Glaucon."

"What kind of traits do you mean?"

"The timocratic man," I replied, "should be more completely self-centered, and rather less cultured, and yet a lover of music and the arts and a  
549 good listener, but no orator. Again, such a person

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<sup>14</sup> A probable reference to the ambition of Glaucon, who, when under twenty, wished to try his hand in public affairs.

—Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, III, VI.

will be harsh with slaves, not because, like the thoroughly educated man, he despises slaves, and he will be courteous to freemen, and very obedient to rulers, but eager for power and ambitious, deeming his right to rule derived, not from his skill in speaking, or from any gift of like nature, but from his exploits against the enemy, and his warlike exercises; and in consequence, he will be a passionate lover of athletics and the chase."

"Yes, this characteristic belongs to the citizens of the state in question."

"Then, too," I said, "will not such a person while young despise riches, but when he grows older, will he not always be more likely to covet them, since he shares the nature of him who is eager for gain, and is not sincere in his quest of virtue, owing to his want of the best guardian?"

"What guardian?" asked Adeimantus.

"Reason," I replied, "joined with music; which when inborn dwells within its possessor as the only lifelong preserver of virtue."

"Fitly spoken," he replied.

"Such doubtless is the timocratic youth, and he resembles the timocratic state."

"That is certain."

"His origin," I continued, "may be thus explained: He is often the still youthful son of an excellent father, who resides mayhap in an ill-governed state, shunning honors, offices, lawsuits, and all the customary activities of a busy life, content to forego his rights and privileges for the sake of escaping trouble—"

"And how," asked Adeimantus, "is the character of the young man developed?"

"Whenever," I resumed, "he in the first instance hears his mother vent her grief because her husband does not belong to the ruling class, and observes that on that account she is belittled among the other women; and further notes that she sees his father quite indifferent to money-making, refusing to fight and wrangle privately in law courts, and publicly (in politics), but is perfectly aware that matters of this nature never trouble the good man, who gives them slight attention, while he neither holds his wife in high honor, nor despises her; in consequence of all this she is vexed and tells him that his father is lacking in manhood and too submissive: adding all other grievances of the kind that the women are constantly harping upon in their discussion of such subjects."

"Yes, indeed," said Adeimantus, "they give us endless talk, and their complaints are of a piece with themselves."

"Well," said I, "you certainly know that, in such families, the servants also, who are thought to be well disposed, sometimes use in secret language of the same sort to the boys, and if they see either a debtor whom his father does not prosecute, or a delinquent of some other kind, they urge upon the son that, when he shall have come to man's estate, he shall execute vengeance upon all such persons, and show himself a better man than his father. And when he stirs from home he hears and sees more to the same effect, those who in the city mind

their own affairs called foolish and held in slight esteem, but men who cannot be restricted within the limits of private business, he finds, are honored and praised. So then, I say, the youth witnessing all these exemplars, and moreover listening to his father's words and seeing at closer range his father's conduct than that of others, being influenced by both of these, his father fostering and strengthening the ruling faculty of his soul, the others, covetousness and passion, possessing by inheritance the nature of a good man, but corrupted by the evil communications of the rest, while drawn in both directions he took the middle course, and subordinating the ruling faculty within him to the intermediate turbulent and passionate principle, he became a high-spirited and ambitious man."

"Very successfully," I think, "you have shown in detail the origin of the timocratic man."

"We have then," I said, "the second form of government and the second type of man."

"Yes, we have," he replied.

VI. "Shall we therefore in the next place with Æschylus speak of 'Another man assigned to another state';<sup>15</sup> or rather, shall we, according to our scheme, begin with the state?"

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<sup>15</sup> The quotation is a parody of two lines of *The Seven Against Thebes*. Compare Sept. 551 and 570.

"Let us by all means," he replied, "first consider the state."

"The government which comes next in order, will, I believe, be oligarchy."

"What do you understand by oligarchy?"

"I mean a form of government based on a property qualification, where the rich have the power, in which the poor have no part."

"I understand," he replied.

"Must we not begin by explaining how the change from timocracy to oligarchy is made?"

"Yes."

"Well," I said, "doubtless even a blind man might discover how the transition from the one to the other comes about."

"How?"

"It is the treasury before mentioned<sup>16</sup> which private individuals fill with gold that works the ruin of timocracy. The first result of this accumulation is that the owners invent their own methods of expenditure, and wrest the laws to this end, themselves and their wives disregarding them."

"That is quite likely to happen."

"And then, I suppose, as they each in turn watched his neighbor with a jealous eye and became his rival in the pursuit of wealth, they transformed into lovers of money the great body of citizens to which they belonged."

"That too is quite likely."

"In the next place," I proceeded, "they make headway in heaping up wealth, and the more they

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<sup>16</sup> In 548 A, where the word means store-room.

"Yes," he answered. "But what is the character of this state, and what are the vices which we said<sup>17</sup> belonged to it?"

VII. "The first defect," I said, "is the restriction which marks the nature of this government. Just consider what would be the effect of making our choice of a pilot depend upon the amount of his property, while the poor man, even though he were a better pilot, should not be allowed to touch the helm."

"We should have disastrous sailing," he replied.

"And does not the same thing hold true about the government of any other thing whatsoever?"

"I at least think so."

"With the exception of a state?" I asked; "or would you include a state as well?"

"I certainly would," he said, "in preference to any other, since government is the most difficult and most important of all."

"Oligarchy then will have, to begin with, this capital defect."

"So it seems."

"But here again: is this defect less serious than the first?"

"What defect?"

"Dissension: Such a state is inherently not

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<sup>17</sup> Compare 544 C.

one; of necessity it combines in itself two states, the one composed of the rich, the other of the poor, who are inhabiting the same spot and incessantly plotting against one another."

"Surely," he said, "that fault is no less grievous than the first."

"But certainly this is by no means a desirable thing for the government in question, that its citizens are virtually unable to conduct a war because they are compelled either to employ the armed multitude and then to fear them more than the enemy, or, in case they do not call them out, to present themselves in actual battle as literally oligarchs, or masters of few; furthermore, they are unwilling to furnish the sinews of war, seeing that through avarice they keep back their money."

"Undesirable."

"Then again, to return to what we condemned some time ago,<sup>18</sup> do you think it right that, under such a constitution, the same persons should, at one and the same time, engage in agriculture, commerce and war?"

552

"Not at all right."

"Consider now whether the greatest evil inhering first in this constitution is not the one I am about to mention."

"What is it?"

"A man is allowed to sell all his property and another to acquire it, while after the sale the vendor dwells in the city of which he constitutes no

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<sup>18</sup> In Book IV, 434 A ff.

part either as trader, artisan, horseman, or foot-soldier, but is simply known as a poor and helpless creature."

"Yes," he said, "that evil makes its first appearance in this state."

"At least, such an evil is not prohibited in oligarchical states; for otherwise some would not be immensely rich, while others were desperately poor."

"You are right."

"But consider another point: When such a man, in the days of his prosperity, was spending money, was he at all more useful to the state for the purposes we just now mentioned? Or did he only appear to belong to the ruling body, but was in reality neither a ruler nor a servant of the state, but merely a spendthrift?"

"Just as you say, he seemed to be a ruler, but was nothing more than a spendthrift."

"May we not then say of this man that, as the drone<sup>19</sup> is produced in the cell to be the pest of the hive, so he is produced as a drone in the house to be the pest of the state?"

"We may surely say that, Socrates."

"And is it not true, my dear Adeimantus, that God has made all the flying drones stingless, but of these walking drones he has made only some stingless, while others of them he has provided with very sharp stings? And that out of the stingless class come those who die paupers in their old age,

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<sup>19</sup> Compare Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 304 ff.

but from the stingers come all who are termed criminals?"

"Quite true," he replied.

"It is then clear that, in every state where you shall see paupers, somewhere in that place are concealed thieves, cutpurses, robbers of temples, and criminals of every sort."

"No doubt."

"Well, in oligarchical states do you not find paupers?"

"Yes," he said, "nearly all are paupers, with the exception of the governors."

"May we not then believe," I asked, "that there are found in them many evil-doers, armed with stings, whom the magistrates deliberately hold down by main force?"

"Certainly we may so believe," he said.

"Shall we not attribute the existence of such persons therein to want of education, bad training, and an evil constitution of the state?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Such then is the character of the oligarchical state; such are the evils that afflict it, and perhaps it has evils still more numerous."

"Perhaps so."

"Thus," I said, "let us regard as complete the 553 description of the government which is called oligarchy, where the rulers are chosen according to property; and let us now examine the oligarchical man, looking at his origin and at his character when he has reached maturity."

"By all means let us do so," he said.

VIII. "Well then, is not the transition from the timocratical man to the oligarchical brought about chiefly in this manner?"

"In what manner?"

"When the son of such a man at first emulates his father and follows in his footsteps, but then of a sudden sees him foundering against the state, like a vessel against a sunken rock, and his property and his person lost, sees his father, who had either been at the head of armies or invested with some other high office, brought to trial upon the accusation of base informers, and either put to death, or banished, or deprived of civil rights, and all his possessions confiscate."

"All this is likely," he replied.

"When, my friend, he has seen his father overwhelmed by these disasters which he shares with him, the son, robbed of his inheritance, and, I fancy, filled with alarm, straightway thrusts ambition and the passionate principle named just now<sup>20</sup> headforemost from the throne of his heart and, humbled by poverty, taking eagerly to money-making, and by petty economies and hard work accumulates a fortune. Do you not believe that such a person will then establish upon that vacant throne the spirit of lust and avarice and make of it the great king within him, decked with tiara and collar, and girt with the scimitar?"<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> In 550 B.

<sup>21</sup> For the trappings of an oriental monarch see Xenophon's *Cyropædia* II, 4, 6.

"I have no doubt of it," he replied.

"And when, I imagine, he has seated reason and courage upon the ground, on either side, at the feet of their new master, as underlings and slaves, he compels the one to reflect and dwell upon nothing save how smaller sums of money shall grow into larger ones, and forbids the other to admire and honor anything save riches and rich men, or to make anything the chief object of ambition save the acquisition of a great fortune and the means that contribute to this end."

"There is," he said, "no other transformation in a young man so swift and so evident as that from ambition to avarice."

"Is then," said I, "a character of this kind oligarchical?"

"Well, at all events, his transformation is from an individual who resembles the state from which oligarchy took its rise."

"Let us then consider whether he will be like oligarchy."

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"Yes, let us do so."

IX. "First, then, will he not resemble oligarchy in this, that he sets the highest value on wealth?"

"Yes."

"And further he resembles it in that he is nig-

they are in any position such as gives them great power to commit injustice."

"You are right."

"Is it not then clear from this that in his ordinary transactions, in which his apparent justice secures him a good reputation, such a person, by a kind of prudent self-restraint, keeps under the other evil passions that are within him, not convincing them that they are criminal, or taming them by reason, but from necessity and fear, because he trembles for the rest of his possessions?"

"That is perfectly clear."

"And indeed, my friend," I said, "when it is a question of spending what is not their own, you will then find prevailing in most persons of this class the natural desires of the drone."

"Yes, and powerfully too," he replied.

"Such a person therefore will not be at peace with himself; he will not be one man but two, yet in the conflict within him his better desires will generally overmaster the inferior ones."

"That is true."

"For these reasons then, I think, such a person will present a more respectable appearance than many others; but the true virtue of a soul attuned to harmony and concord will be far from him."

"I believe it."

"And doubtless the parsimonious man will, as a private citizen, be but a sorry competitor either for 555 a prize of victory, or other object of noble ambition; for he will not spend money for the sake of glory and contests that bring renown, seeing that

he is afraid of exciting his expensive appetites, and summoning them as helpers in his struggle, so that, in true oligarchical style, he carries on the war with only a part of his forces, and is usually defeated, and keeps his money."

"Quite true."

"Can we any longer then doubt that, by virtue of similarity, the miser and money-maker corresponds to the oligarchical state?"

"Not at all."

X. "Next comes, I suppose, the turn of democracy; we must consider first its origin, then its character; and afterwards we shall observe the traits of the democratic man to the end that we may put him on trial."

"Yes," he said, "that would be our regular method of procedure."

"Well, then," I asked, "does not the change from oligarchy to democracy come about somehow in this fashion, from an insatiable desire of that which oligarchy has made its chief good, namely, the necessity of gaining the greatest possible wealth?"

"How then?"

"Since the rulers in an oligarchy, I believe, owe their power to the acquisition of great wealth, they refuse to restrain by law such of the young men as

are spendthrifts from squandering and running through their property, in order that they themselves, by purchasing the possessions of such persons and lending them money on the security of the same resources, may gain still greater riches and higher honor."

"True, beyond all question."

"Well, is not this at last evident that the citizens of a state cannot hold wealth in honor, and at the same time acquire the self-control that is adequate, but must disregard the one or the other?"

"That is clear enough," he said.

"Furthermore, in oligarchical states the rulers, by being negligent and permitting licence to go unchecked, sometimes reduce to poverty persons of no mean rank."

"Yes, they certainly do."

"And there they sit, as I suppose, idle in the city, these hapless men,—provided with stings and well armed, some of them burdened with debts, and others disfranchised, and still others handicapped in both ways; and they hate and plot against those who are in possession of their property and against the rest of the citizens, and are eager in their desire for revolution."

"That is the case."

"On the other hand, the usurers, with downcast eyes, intent on gain, and acting as if they did not see the conspirators, employ their money to inflict deadly wounds upon others who unwittingly present themselves as victims, and, by exacting exorbitant interest, many times in excess of the parent 556

sum, multiply the brood of drones and beggars in the state."

"Yes," he said, "they do that."

"At any rate," said I, "they are unwilling to extinguish this kind of evil as it blazes up, either by that expedient of preventing a man from disposing of his property as he pleases, or by resorting to this expedient which by means of another law puts an end to all these abuses."

"Through what law?"

"I have in mind a law which is next best to the one enacted against the spendthrifts, and which compels the citizens to take heed to their characters. For if we should require that, as a general rule, every man should enter into voluntary contracts at his own risk, the money-lenders would conduct their business less shamelessly, and such evils as we were speaking of just now would show themselves less frequently in the state."

"Yes, far less frequently," he said.

"But it is," said I, "by all such conduct already named that the rulers reduce their subjects to this pitiable condition in the state; they corrupt themselves and their children; do not the latter, spoiled by luxury and unaccustomed to bear the fatigues of body and soul, become indolent and too effeminate to resist either pleasure or pain?"

"Of course."

"But are they themselves indifferent to everything else except making money, and do they concern themselves quite as little as the paupers with the cultivation of virtue?"

"Undoubtedly."

"When now under such conditions the rulers and their subjects find themselves together either in traveling or in some other mutual undertaking, on a pilgrimage, or in the army, as shipmates or fellow-soldiers, or again when they observe one another in the stress of dangers, the poor cannot possibly, in this situation, be despised by the rich; on the contrary, when the poor man, lean and sunburnt, often posted in battle by the side of the rich man reared in the shade, encumbered with superfluous flesh, sees the latter laboring for breath, and in sore distress, don't you believe he will reach the conclusion that men like him owe their wealth to nothing but the cowardice of the poor? And when later they meet in private will not one say to another, we have these gentry at our mercy, for they are worthless wights?"

"Yes, I know right well," he replied, "that they talk in this way."

"Now as a diseased body requires only a slight impelling force<sup>28</sup> from without to bring on an attack of illness and sometimes even without any external influence is at war with itself, even so does not the state, which finds itself in the same condition with that of a diseased body, on a slight occasion, fall into a dangerous crisis and engage in civil war, when parties within it appeal for outside help, some to the leaders of an oligarchy, others to the

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<sup>28</sup> Compare Sophocles, O. T., 961.

"A little force will lay to rest the weary limbs of age."

"Clearly."

"Then in this kind of a state, I suppose, more than in any other, there will arise men of every sort."

"Yes, there will."

"It appears then," said I, "that this state is the fairest of all; like an embroidered garment span-gled with many colors of every shade, this state diversified with all sorts of characters will be thought most admirable; and perhaps," I continued, "as children and women admire objects of many colors, so many people will judge this common-wealth to be wondrous fair."

"Doubtless," he replied.

"Yes, my good sir," I said, "and here will be the right place in which to look for a constitution."

"Why?"

"Because, by reason of the freedom that prevails there, it contains every variety of constitutions; and if indeed anyone wished to found a state, as we were doing just now, he must, as it seems, go to a democracy as one would go into a bazar where all sorts of constitutions are to be found, and pick out the form that suits his fancy, and then, after making his choice, proceed to found his state."

"He will be likely to have patterns enough."

"But," I proceeded, "seeing there is no necessity for you to govern in this state, even if you are qualified for the task, or on the other hand, to be governed, unless you are willing, or to go to war when the rest are at war, or to keep peace when others are doing so, if you have no desire for

political career, but exalts him to honor, provided only he professes to be a friend of common people?"

"She is," he replied, "truly magnanimous."

"These and kindred advantages are characteristic of democracy, which is apparently an agreeable, disorderly commonwealth, full of variety, apportioning a sort of equality to equals and unequals without distinction."

"You are describing to the life what is well known."

XII. "Consider now," I said, "what sort of a man the corresponding individual is. Or must we begin, as we did in the case of the commonwealth, by inquiring into his origin?"

"Yes, we must," he replied.

"Is not his advent explained in this way? Will he not be the son of our parsimonious, oligarchical man, brought up under his father's supervision, and in his father's habits?"

"Quite so."

"This son, like his father, masters by force the desires within him which involve expense and are inconsistent with money-making, desires which are called superfluous."

"That is obvious."

"Would you like now," I said, "that we may avoid misunderstanding, to have us begin by dis-

tinguishing between the necessary and the superfluous desires?"

"I should."

"Well, may we not justly call necessary those desires which we cannot possibly get rid of, and such as, when satisfied, do us good? For our nature is bound to crave the gratification of both these classes. Is it not so?"

"Yes."

"We shall be right then in calling them necessary."

"Yes, we shall."

"But in respect of those from which one might free himself, if he does his endeavor from his youth up, and which moreover when present do no good, but only evil, shall we not describe them justly in calling them all superfluous desires?"

"Justly indeed."

"Well now, shall we employ an example of each of the two kinds, just as they are, that we may thus form a general idea of them?"

"Yes, we must do so."

"Will the desire of eating, so far as it conduces to health and vigor, and the desire to have simple food and condiments be necessary?"

"I think it will."

"At any rate the desire for bread is necessary from two considerations, seeing it is useful, and that, when not gratified, it puts an end to life."

"Yes."

"Whereas the appetite for condiments is necessary only so far as it contributes to vigor."

" True.

" But the desire that goes beyond this, and is eager for dishes more delicate than the simple food just mentioned, a desire which most people might subdue by checking and training it in youth, which is hurtful to the body, and no less hurtful to the soul in its quest of wisdom and temperance,—ought it not to be reckoned among the unnecessary desires?"

" Most certainly it ought."

" May we then say that these last are extravagant desires, whereas the others are profitable, because they lend aid to production?"

" Yes."

" Shall we pronounce the same judgment on the pleasures of love, and all the other pleasures?"

" The same."

" And by him whom we just now called a drone did we not mean the man who was surfeited with the expensive pleasures and desires, and in bondage to the unnecessary appetites; while by him who was subject to such as are necessary, we meant the parsimonious, oligarchical man?"

" Undoubtedly."

XIII. " And now," I said, " let us return <sup>26</sup> and explain once more how the oligarchic comes to be

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<sup>26</sup> From the digression beginning at 558 D.

a place in the young man's soul, order was restored."

"Yes, that sometimes happens," he said.

"And then again, I think, after one set of desires had been expelled, another brood of them, akin to the first, sprang up unperceived, and, because his father was an unskilled teacher, grew numerous and furious."

"An instance like that is common enough."

"These dragged him back to his old intimates and, as a result of this secret intercourse, they constantly multiplied."

"Quite true."

"And finally they seized upon the citadel of the young man's soul, finding it void of sound knowledge, of noble pursuits, and true principles, which are the best guards and sentinels in the minds of men who are beloved of the gods."

"Yes, best by far," he said.

"And in their place, I fancy, false and braggart thoughts and phrases mounted up and occupied the deserted post."

"That is certainly true."

"Does he not then return to the land of the lotus eaters,<sup>28</sup> and openly make his abode there? And if there comes from his relatives some reinforcement to the parsimonious element of his soul, those braggart maxims forthwith bar the gates of the royal castle within him, refuse an entrance to the

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<sup>28</sup> See *Odyssey* IX, 81 ff. The lotus-flower of sensual indulgence makes man grow forgetful of his divine origin.

time on unnecessary as on necessary pleasures. But if he is fortunate, and does not run riot without restraint, but when, owing in a measure also to the influence of advancing years, the tumult of passion is mostly over, supposing he then readmits some of the banished virtues, and does not wholly surrender himself to their successors, in that case he establishes a sort of equality between his pleasures, and yields the government of his soul to the first one that offers, and, as it were, wins the lot until he is sated with that, and then succumbs to another, despising none of them, but cherishing them all alike."

"You are right."

"Yes," said I, "and he does not accept or admit into his castle any word of sound advice; if any one tells him that some pleasures follow the lead of good and noble desires, and others are the fruits of ignoble desires, and that he ought to pursue and honor some, but to chastise and subdue the others — by way of reply to these admonitions he shakes his head, and declares that pleasures are all alike and deserve to be equally respected."

"Indeed," he replied, "such a person certainly conducts himself in that way."

"Thus then," I said, "he continues to live from day to day, indulging the passion that first assails him. To-day he drinks deep and delights in the music of the flute; to-morrow he is a water-drinker and mortifies the flesh; now he is active in athletics, again he is idle neglecting everything, and then living as if he were a student of philosophy. Often

he goes into politics, and leaping to his feet speaks and acts at random. And if at any time the charm of a military career attracts him, he straightway becomes a soldier; or if he admires the successful financier, he takes to money-making. In short, there is no order or law in his conduct, and he continues to lead this life which he calls agreeable, free, and fortunate."

"Well," he replied, "you have certainly sketched the life of a man to whom all laws are equal."

"Yes, and in my opinion," I continued, "his is a manifold life replete with a multitude of diverse traits, and the man himself is the fair and versatile person who answers to the state already described.<sup>29</sup> And many a man and many a woman would naturally envy his manner of life, seeing he unites within him very many patterns of constitutions and characters."

"Quite true," he said.

"What then! Is it your mind that such a man  
562 must be classed with democracy, as he may be justly  
called democratic?"

"Let him be so classed," said he.

XIV. "It only remains for us henceforth to consider the most beautiful commonwealth and the

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<sup>29</sup> In 557 C.

most beautiful man, I mean tyranny and the tyrant."

"Just so," he said.

"Come now, my good friend, what is the character of tyranny? In respect of its origin, it is pretty clear that it comes from democracy."

"That is clear."

"Then does tyranny take its rise out of democracy in somewhat the same way as democracy comes from oligarchy?"

"How?"

"That which the oligarchies proposed to themselves as the chief good, and by means of which oligarchy was established, was wealth—is it not so?"

"Yes."

"Well, it was the insatiate desire of riches, and the neglect of all the rest for the sake of money-making, that wrought the ruin of oligarchy."

"True," he replied.

"And now is not that which brings about the overthrow of democracy also an insatiate desire for the object which it defines as the supreme good?"

"What good?"

"Liberty," I replied. "For in a democratic state you would doubtless hear it said that liberty is its fairest possession; and for this reason in such a state alone would the man who has been born in a condition of freedom be content to dwell."

"Yes, indeed," he said, "one hears talk of that kind very often."

"Well, now, and this is what I was going to say,

does not the insatiate desire for liberty, accompanied with indifference to other things, effect a change in democracy, and make the demand for tyranny inevitable?"

"How so?"

"Whenever, I think, a democratic state, which is thirsting for freedom, has fallen under the rule of wicked cup-bearers and has drunk too deep of the unmixed wine of liberty, then, unless the rulers are entirely submissive and supply great draughts of freedom, it straightway subjects them to censure and punishes them as accursed oligarchs."

"Yes," he said, "they do that."

"And those," said I, "who are obedient to rulers, it insults, treating them as willing slaves and worthless. It praises and honors in private and in public the rulers who are like subjects and the subjects who take the airs of rulers. Is it not inevitable that in such a state liberty runs riot?"

"Doubtless it does."

"Yes, my friend," said I, "and the contagion of anarchy steals into private families, and at last spreads so far as to infect even the animals."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean, for instance, that the father accustoms himself to treat his child as an equal, and to fear his sons, that the son makes himself equal to his father, and does not reverence or fear his parents, since through obedience to them he may suffer the loss of liberty; that the metic is on an equality with  
563 the citizen, and the citizen with the metic while the stranger fares as well as either"

"Yes," he said, "that is the outcome."

"Yes," I continued, "the evils just named are conspicuous as well as other trifles of the same kind. In such a state of things the teacher fears and flatters his scholars; and the scholars despise their masters and none the less their tutors. And in general the young pattern after their elders, and enter the lists with them in the conflict of words and deeds. The old men, on their part, condescending to the young, are full of wit and gayety; they assume the manners of the young for fear of being thought morose and dictatorial."

"Quite true," he said.

"But the last extreme of the fullness of freedom," I said, "my friend, which is found in such a state, is when the slaves of both sexes are no less free than those who have purchased them. And we almost forgot to tell how great is the equality and liberty of men and women in relation to each other."

"Shall we not then, with Æschylus," said he, "utter what just now rose to our lips?"

"Of course," I replied, "and that is just what I, for my part, am doing; and I must say that no one, without the kind of knowledge which is gained by experience, would believe how much more free the domestic animals are in a democratic state than in any other; for actually the pet dogs, as the proverb has it, are like their mistresses, and the horses and asses are in the habit of marching along with a free and dignified movement, and they will run foul of any one who meets them in the streets if he does

the year, in plants, and in living bodies, but most noticeably in governments."

"That is true," he said.

"Thus in states as in individuals excessive liberty would seem to be transformed into nothing else than excessive slavery."

"That again is true."

"Hence, in all likelihood," I said, "tyranny takes its rise from no other form of government than democracy, the most complete and the most intolerable despotism following, as I believe, the extreme liberty."

"Yes, that stands to reason," he said.

"That, however, I believe, was not what you were asking about; you wish to know, rather, what is that same disease which is engendered both in oligarchy and democracy, and which reduces the latter to slavery."

"You are right," he said.

"Well, then," said I, "I was referring to the class of idle spendthrifts, already mentioned; some of them are exceedingly brave, and are leaders; the others, who are more cowardly, are followers. We compared them, as you know, the first to drones armed with stings, the second to stingless drones."

"Yes," he said, "and rightly."

"Now these two classes," I said, "make a disturbance in every state wherein they are generated, just as phlegm and bile disturb the human body. The legislator, as the skilled physician of the state, must take in advance against them the same precautions that the wise bee-keeper takes against the

"Of what kind?"

"Where all men are engaged in making money, those, I imagine, who are most orderly by nature, generally become the wealthiest."

"Naturally so."

"Hence, I fancy, it is out of these persons that the readiest and most abundant supply of honey is squeezed for the drones."

"Why, of course," he said. "How could anyone squeeze honey out of the poor?"

"Then, I suppose, such wealthy people are called the drones' garden."

"Just so," he replied.

XVI. "The people would form a third class, 565 consisting of those who work with their hands and take no part in politics, who have but little property. And in a democracy this class is the most numerous and the most powerful when it is assembled."

"Yes, it is," he said. "But it does not often frequent the assembly unless it receives a share of the honey."

"And therefore it always does receive a share, so long as its leaders, while depriving the rich of their property and dividing the plunder among the people, contrive to keep the largest share for themselves."



"Well, yes," he said, "on those terms the people do share."

"And the rich who are plundered, I suppose, are compelled to defend themselves by speaking before the assembly and by employing every means in their power."

"No doubt."

"And then even if they have no longing for a revolution, they are accused by their opponents of conspiring against the common people and of desiring an oligarchy."

"Undoubtedly."

"And therefore in the end, when they see the people, not from willful perversity, but through ignorance, and because they are misled by the mendacity of the informers, doing their best to injure them, then indeed, whether they wish it or not, they become oligarchs in reality. Not of their own accord are they thus transformed. The drone's sting of which we spoke produces this evil also."

"That is strictly true."

"And thereupon follow impeachments and judgments and trials of one another."

"Certainly."

"And is it not the custom of the people always to take one man as their guardian whom they foster and exalt to greatness?"

"Yes, it is their custom."

"This then," I said, "is clear, that whenever a tyrant arises, he springs up from the root of this guardianship, and from nothing else."

"Yes, perfectly clear."

"What then is the beginning of the change from a protector of the people to a tyrant? Is it not evidently when the protector begins to do the same thing that is told in the story of the temple of Lycaean Zeus in Arcadia?"

"What is the story?" he asked.

"That he who has tasted the vitals of a human victim which have been cut up with the vitals of the other victims must of necessity become a wolf. Have you never heard the legend?"

"Yes, I have."

"And the people's protector, transformed in like manner, when he finds a mob completely subject to his authority, does not keep his hands from the blood of his kindred. But—as is the prevailing custom—he prefers unjust accusations against them; he brings them before the courts and murders them, extinguishing human life, and with unholy tongue and lips tasting the blood of kinsmen. He banishes from home and kills, and hints at the 566 abolition of debts and the redistribution of land. And after that is not necessity, decreed by fate, laid upon such a man either to perish by the hand of his enemies, or to become a tyrant and change from a human being to a wolf?"

"Yes, strong necessity," he said.

"This then," said I, "is the man who fomented sedition against the rich."

"Yes, it is."

"Suppose he has been banished and has afterwards returned in despite of his enemies, does he not return a full-blown tyrant?"



"No doubt."

"But if his enemies are unable to compass his banishment or death by accusing him before the citizens, then they lay their plots for his secret taking-off by assassination."

"Yes," he said, "that is what frequently happens."

"Thereupon all who have attained this bad eminence resort to the tyrant's notorious demand: they ask the public for a body-guard, so that the people's protector may not be lost to them."

"Yes, they do that," he said.

"And the people, I fancy, grant the request, for they are full of fear for his safety, and without fear for themselves."

"Exactly so."

"Hence, when this is observed by a man who has wealth, and along with his wealth the reputation of being an enemy of the people, then, my friend, obeying the oracle given to Cræsus:

'By Hermus' pebbly shore he flees,  
Halts not, and blushes not to play the coward.'"<sup>81</sup>

"Quite true," said he, "for otherwise he would not blush for shame a second time."

"But, I suppose, if he is captured, he dies."

"Of course."

"Meanwhile our protector of the people does not himself lie prostrate in his grandeur,<sup>82</sup> but after

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<sup>81</sup> Herodotus I, 55.

<sup>82</sup> Compare Iliad XVI, 776.

casting down many victims, stands upon the chariot of state, transformed from a protector into an absolute tyrant."

"There is no doubt of it," he said.

XVII. "Shall we consider now," said I, "the happiness of the man himself, and of the state in which such a creature is produced?"

"By all means," he said, "let us do that."

"Well now," I continued, "at first, in the early days of his power, has he not a smile and a salutation for every one he meets, does he not deny that he is a tyrant, and make lavish promises both in public and in private, grant release from debts, divide the lands between the commons and his favorites, and pretend to be gracious and mild to all?"

"That must be his course," he replied.

"But when he disposes of his outside enemies by coming to terms with some, and killing others, and has nothing to fear from them, then, I suppose, his first measure is to be constantly stirring up wars, so that the people may require a general."

"Yes, that is his natural course."

"Is it not also his scheme that the citizens, impoverished by the payment of taxes, may be compelled to think only of getting their daily bread,

and thus be less likely to lay plots against him?"

"That is obvious."

"And if, as I imagine is the case, there are some whom he suspects of harboring independent thoughts, persons who will not submit to his authority, is it not his plan to be rid of them by surrendering them to the enemy? Must not the tyrant for all these reasons be continually stirring up war?"

"He must."

"And is he not certain, as a result of such conduct, to be more and more hated by the citizens?"

"No doubt."

"And must we not expect that some of those who have helped to establish him in power, and who possess influence, will speak freely both to him and to one another, the most courageous among them protesting against the course of events?"

"Yes, that is to be expected."

"And the tyrant, if he is to rule, must put all these out of the way until he has no one left, either friend or foe, who is of any worth."

"Evidently."

"And hence he must keenly observe who is courageous, who high-minded, who wise, who wealthy; and he is so happy that, whether he like it or not, he is compelled to be an enemy of all such, and to lay plots against them until he has purified the state."

"A noble purification!" he said.

"Yes," I said, "the very opposite of the purification which doctors make of the body; for they re-

move the worst, and leave the best, while he does the reverse."

"Why, apparently, he must do so, if he is to be master."

XVIII. "By a blessed necessity then," said I, "is he bound, which compels him to dwell with a crowd of miscreants, and to be hated by them too, or not to live at all."

"Yes, that is the alternative," he said.

"And is it not true that the more he is detested by the citizens on account of this conduct, the greater will be his need of a more numerous and faithful body-guard?"

"Yes, indeed."

"But who will these loyal retainers be? and where will he procure them?"

"Of their own accord," he said, "they will come to him, winging their way in flocks, if he give them their pay."

"By the dog," said I, "you seem to be talking of more drones of every sort brought in from foreign parts."

"Yes, you are right," he replied.

"But will he not prefer to get them on the spot, by robbing the citizens of their slaves, setting them free and enrolling them in his body-guard?"

all the other states, assemble great crowds, hire men with fine, loud, and persuasive voices, and thus draw the commonwealths over to tyranny and democracy."

"They certainly will."

"And in return for these services they receive rewards and honors, chiefly, as is natural, from tyrants, but also from democracies. But as they ascend higher into the upper regions of constitutions, the more their honor fails and, as if from want of breath, is unable to advance."

"Quite true."

XIX. "However, in this we have digressed from our subject," I said. "Let us return to the tyrant's army, and consider how that fair, numerous, multiform, and ever-changing host is to be supported."

"It is evident," he said, "that if there are sacred treasures in the city, he will appropriate and spend them; and in so far as these and the property of his victims<sup>88</sup> may suffice, he will demand smaller contributions from the people."

"But what will he do when these resources are exhausted?"

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<sup>88</sup> In this disputed passage the reading proposed by Dr. James Adam is followed.

"It is clear," he said, "that he will draw upon his father's estate for the support of himself, his boon companions, his favorites, and his mistresses."

"I understand your meaning," I replied; "because the public that begot the tyrant will maintain him and his companions."

"It cannot escape doing so," he said.

"But what do you say to this?" I continued. "Suppose the populace should fly into a passion and declare it to be unjust that a grown-up son should be supported by his father, but, on the contrary, the father should be supported by the son; 569 and that they did not give him birth and establish him in order that when he was grown to manhood they should become slaves of their own slaves and support him and his slaves with a rabble of others, but that under his leadership they might be freed from the yoke of the rich and the so-called aristocratic faction in the city; and they now order him and his comrades to depart from the city, just as a father might drive his son and his mob of turbulent fellow-revelers from the house."

"Then, by Zeus," he said, "the people will discover what a monster they have begotten, fostered, and reared, and that it is an instance of the weaker trying to expel the stronger."

"What do you mean?" I asked. "Will the tyrant dare to use violence and beat his father if he resist him?"

"Yes," he replied, "after he has disarmed him."

"You represent the tyrant," I said, "as a parricide and a cruel guardian of old age; and this now,

as it seems, at last would admittedly be tyranny: the people, as they say in the proverb, in trying to escape from the smoke of servitude to free men, will have fallen into the fire of the despotism of slaves. They will have exchanged the excessive and unseasonable liberty which they once enjoyed for the harshest and bitterest servitude to slaves."

"Doubtless," he said, "that is just what happens."

"Well, then," I asked, "shall we not be right in saying that we have given an adequate explanation of the transition from democracy to tyranny, and of the nature of tyranny after that change has been brought about?"

"Yes," he replied, "the explanation is complete."





